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MARRIAGE

C. G. 585 The marriage customs of the Georgians are regulated by Christianity. The wedding rites go back to the ceremony of the Byzantine court: crowns are held over the heads of bride and groom, who are addressed as "queen" and "king." After the ceremony in the church the wedding is celebrated publicly in the house of the bride; the feast may last several days. Then the bride is brought to the house of the groom in a noisy procession on horseback. She is welcomed by her mother-in-law, who puts a lump of sugar or other sweets into her mouth; then she is led around the hearth, and a male child is put on her knees to ensure fecundity. The Georgian mountaineers (especially the Khevsur) have to a certain extent preserved customs similar to those found among the N. Caucasian mountaineers.

C. 583 The marriage customs of the North-Caucasian peoples (including the Ossetes) were only to a minor extent influenced by Islam or Christianity, and preserved older traits. In the whole area from the N. W. to the Andi-Dido region in Dagestan, there are clear traces of a tradition of acquiring brides by capture and abduction. At the same time, in the whole N. Caucasus the custom of paying a bride price (R. kalym) prevailed. Originally, the C. 581 personal preference of the girl was not taken into account at all, the marriage being arranged by her family on the basis of social or

581 economic considerations. In more recent times, under the influence of Islam, Christianity, and also of the Soviet regime, it has become a more important factor.

583 The mixture of various traditions can be exemplified by the Circassian usages. It was customary for the suitor, with the help of his comrades, to abduct his bride from the house of her parents. Often the kalym had been agreed upon beforehand, but the family of the bride nevertheless put up a token of resistance against the abduction. In cases where the family was against the marriage, 582 elopement was not uncommon. A night spent by the girl with her abductor made her his lawful wife according to the Circassian adat; later, a marriage contract drawn up by the mullah gave the marriage its legal sanction; now, marriages are regulated by Soviet law.

In Dagestan, local endogamy is observed more or less strictly; in the rest of the N. Caucasus, and also among the Georgian mountaineers, exogamous rules prevail. [587] Formerly, the levirate and stepmother-inheritance were widespread among the Caucasian mountaineers; there was also a strong insistance upon marrying within one's social rank.

• 585 Among all the Caucasian mountaineers observing exogamy, there existed a variety of avoidance rules. E. g., the bridegroom would hide during the wedding feast and afterwards only secretly visit his wife, who after

585 the wedding returned home or stayed with strangers or in a special house for a period.
606 There were numerous taboos for the wife with regard to her in-laws, especially the older ones (prohibition to speak to them, or to address them by name, etc.), to a certain extent also for the husband with regard to his parents-in-law, until he was "reconciled"
576 with them. Very strict rules governed the behavior of the married couple in the presence of others; they could not call each other by name, and any show of affection was considered bad form.

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so far as to give them the title of the "most beautiful women in the world." Whether they, or perhaps the Mingrelians or others, deserve this title does not concern us here. What does matter is the conviction of the Turks and Persians that Cherkess women are beautiful. It is said that the eunuchs of Persia used to lay down their lives for them, and today, it is a known fact, that the Turks are still willing to pay immense sums to have these singularly beautiful women in their harems. No wonder then, that bride-markets were not unusual in Circassia in the nineteenth century. And even today they are still operating, using of course the black-market technique. What we wish to emphasize is that the girl sold on the bride-market is not sold *against* her will. She is not sold as a slave, even though slave-traders are the middlemen of the actual purchasers. She is not sold against her will; no, she is proud to be sold, proud to see a man give up all he has just to win her. If it is not pride that makes her so eager to be sold on the bride-market, then it is ambition. These girls have dreams just as our girls do, though of a somewhat different type. In Turkey they will be sold to a *rich* man; they will be given a *comfortable* lodging, an excellent *education*. Dreams these are indeed, great dreams that can be realized only outside of their own homeland and only in a Turkish harem, only on the bride-market![6]

The NORTHEASTERN CAUCASIANS. The Chechen girls according to their own native *adats* have very little to say about their future husbands. They must wait till their father (or if he is dead, their eldest brother) marries them off to whomever *he* thinks is best,[7] and, primarily, of course, best for the family, for marriage is a family affair. Child-engagements[8] are again a proof that not even the male children enjoy the *right* to choose their mates.

decision of the Ingushi, no marriage was to be considered valid unless the bride

§ 118 of the "*Adats* of the Ingush Province in the 1860's" calls for special attention. It reads: "Since the end of 1862, according to an unanimous decision of the Ingushi, no marriage was to be considered valid unless the bride had freely consented.[9] The *adat* collection then goes on to give the motive for the decision (§ 156): "Till very recently (1862) a woman was regarded as a slave: she enjoyed no human rights. Turning a deaf ear to her plea and protests, disregarding her sobs and tears, her family would sell her off like a ram, throw her on a cart, and deliver her to her husband."[10] Such a miserable bride, the collection tells us, would in most cases run away from her purchaser. But where could she flee except to her own family — unfortunately the same persons who sold her into "slavery"? Her family, however, had to return the fugitive to her lawful husband, for the contract had to be observed to prevent bloodshed. She would then run away again, and even a third time, making life

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[6] Cf. Esad-Bey, *op. cit.*, pp. 202—207. Longworth, *A Year among the Circassians*, I, p. 279.

[7] Cf. The general *adats* for the Black Sea Line, Kuban and Terek Territories, Leontovič, II, p. 251, § 148. *Adats* of 1843 for all Chechens, Leontovič, II, p. 112, § 8. *Adats* of 1864 for the Chechen tribes of Salati, Aukh, and Ichkeria, Leontovič, II, p. 144. Adats of the 1860's for the Ingush Province, Leontovič, II, p. 169. A. P. Berže, Čečnja i Čečency, p. 97.

[8] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 427.

[9] Leontovič, II, p. 169, § 118.

[10] "*Adats* of the Natives of the Ingush Province in the 1860's," Leontovič, II, p. 174, § 156.

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585 more and more miserable for herself.[11] Sometimes the court succeeded in bringing about a peaceful settlement, even a more or less happy reunion,[12] or the husband would in disgust divorce her.[13] That such cases have occurred cannot be denied, but we have here nevertheless an example of the proneness of pre-Soviet writers to exaggerate the "savagery" of the Caucasians.

584 The actual fact is that the Russian Military Government tried to abolish compulsory mating. The Ingushi "agreed" to allow their daughters to choose their own mates or at least to ask them if they consented to the marriage arranged by the head of the family. Grabovskij assures us that the innovation of 1862 was being observed but only as a formality. The girl was generally asked whether she wanted to marry the particular man chosen for her, but no matter what she answered, the plans of her family were infallibly carried out.[14]

The customary laws of the *Lesghians* in regard to freedom of choice do not differ from what we have learned about the other mountain tribes of North Caucasus. According to their *adats*, the *right* to choose a mate belongs to the head of the family and to him alone. If he so wishes, he may betroth his boy or girl while they are still in the cradle.[15] The Lesghian boys have much more to say about their future wives than the girls about their mates, and even in the last century the boys were never forced to marry anyone against their will.[16] Virgins were given much less freedom in selecting their partners than a girl that had lost her virginity.

But just why should a woman who no longer possesses her virginal integrity be given more freedom than a virgin? This practice seems to have been introduced by Islamism, for it is in full accord with the teaching of the Šâfi'itic School. Mohammed is supposed to have encouraged all Walîs (father or guardian) to ask the girl if she freely consented to the proposed marriage. The Prophet failed to specify just what he meant by "girls." The Šâfi'itic School maintained that "girls" means "non-virgins."[17] Others insisted that Mohammed did not intend to distinguish between "virgins" and "non-virgins" but rather between "girls of age" and "girls not yet of age," the

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[11] *ibid.* (§§ 157 f). The lot of a widow or divorcée was supposed to have been much the same. Cf. Leontovič, II, 169, §§ 117 ff.

[12] Leontovič, II, p. 174, § 158.

[13] *ibid.*

[14] "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt žitelej gorskago učastka Inguševskago okruga," SSKG, III (1870), p. 20.

[15] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 362.
Svečin, "Očerk narodonaselenija, nravov i obyčaev Dagestancev," ZKO, II (1853), p. 64.
Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, pp. 180 f.
For customs relating to infant betrothal see: L'vov, "Domašnjaja i semejnaja žizn Dagestanskich gorcev avarskago plemeni," SSKG, III (1870), p. 17. According to Amirov, "Sredi gorcev severnago Dagestana," SSKG, VII (1873), p. 30, mentions that the engagement takes place when the future mates are still under 10. Cf. also Polidaev, *Gorcy severnago Kavkaza*, p. 105.

[16] This was the practice in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 204.

[17] Juynboll, *Handbuch des islâmischen Gesetzes nach der Lehre der schâfi'itischen Schule*, p. 210.

583 other objects.[12] Although the amount is much more stable than in other parts of Caucasia, it does vary according to the presence or absence of virginal integrity and on the social class of the mates.[13]

In the eighteenth century the Nakhchuo paid up to 10 cows ;[14] the Ingushi would have to pay as many as 30 cows.[15] In the 1860's the average *kalym* was about 18 cows (or if paid in money, Rs. 10 per cow).[16] In the twentieth century the *kalym* was so high that the Russian Military Government forced all young men to swear that they would never take or give more than Rs. 105 *kalym*, but, as Baddeley, who is averse to all exaggeration, assures us that "none kept the oath, and the amount was now greater than ever."[17] In 1920 the Ingushi of the Upper Uchaluk paid as much as one million Soviet rubles, 105 silver rubles, two horses, one cow and one ram as *kalym*.[18]

585 In the Ingush *adat* collection of the 1860's (§§ 119 f) we read that the relatives of the groom are obliged to offer the bride a gift of 25 silver rubles on the occasion of her betrothal, of which she becomes the full owner and administrator. On her wedding day she must also be given a guarantee amounting to 80 silver rubles in case of divorce or widowhood.[19] This *adat* is an innovation which owes its origin to Islamism and the Russian Military Government. Although at first it was received with very little favour (and even today we still can come across cases which may be classified under strict purchase), this new form of bride wealth gradually prevailed throughout Ingushetia and Chechnia.[20] In a word, the Chechen bride-price has for about a century at least been tending to evolve into a form of dowry, an evolution analgous to that found among the Abkhaz and Cherkess.

614 It is the obligation of the *taipan* (sib) to provide the necessary *kalym* for all male members, if necessary even by theft.[21]

The following table shows the average bride-price of about an hundred years ago.

TABLE 10

Average bride-price among the Chechens about A.D. 1850

582 587

District	Amount		Source
	For maiden	For widow	
Nazran	12 cows	21 cows ; sometimes only 12	Leontovič, II, p. 117, §§ 9 f.

[12] Cf. "Collection of *Adats* of the Black Sea Line, Kuban and Terek Territories" Leontovič, II, p. 253, § 161.
[13] Leontovič, II, p. 253, §§ 162—165.
[14] Potocki, *Voyage dans les steps d'Astrakhan et du Caucase*, II, p. 127.
[15] *ibid.*
[16] Grabovskij, "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt etc.," SSKG, III (1870), p. 20, *note*.
[17] *The Rugged Flanks of Caucasus*, I, pp. 207 f. See also Vertepov, "Inguši," *Terskij Sbornik*, II (1892), No. 2, p. 132.
[18] N. Jakovlev, *Inguši*, p. 53, *note* 1
[19] Leontovič, II, p. 169, § 119.
[20] Jakovlev, *Inguši*, p. 53.
[21] Jakovlev, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 53.

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District	Amount		Source
	For maiden	For widow	
Kists	18 cows	12 cows	Leontovič, II, p. 118, §§ 18 f.
Dzherakh *	30 cows	20 cows	Leontovič, II, p. 116, §§ 1 f.
Sunsha *	10 cows		Leontovič, II, p. 123, § 1.
Ingushi **	18 cows		Grabovskij, op. cit., p. 20.

* The adat collection actually speaks of rubles and not cows; the approximate value in cows is based on Grabovskij's estimate, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
** In 1864.

Before we pass on to the Lesghian group we wish to mention an interesting form of *kalym*, parallels to which can be found in various parts of the world.[22] We refer to the practice of marrying two deceased persons. Toward the end of the 18th century Potocki observed that "if one Ingush lost a son and another an unmarried daughter, the father of the deceased girl would approach the family of the deceased son and say, 'Your son most likely still doesn't have a wife; I'll give him my daughter, who passed away some time ago, provided that you give me so and so many cows as kalym.' In such a case the father of the dead boy will never refuse."[23] The *kalym* is in such cases generally lower than usual.[24]

When speaking of the Lesghians we must keep in mind that we are dealing with a group strongly influenced by Islamic law, much more so than the rest of the Caucasians. We must also remember that there are local and temporal variations to be taken into account. There are four distinct financial transactions connected with Lesghian marriages: (1) genuine bride purchase, (2) symbolic bride purchase, (3) gifts, (4) the *kebin*, a guarantee against divorce.

Many recent and older authors speak of a "very trivial bride price."[25] Abercromby, for example, reports that the *kalym* of the Avars was no more than two rubles and eighty kopeks.[26] Hahn claims to have found it as low as 25 kopeks.[27] Before Shamyl's time it was supposed to have been possible to "purchase" a wife for a trifle: at Ishal, for instance, for 36 quarts (12 *garncy*) of wheat; in Bahulal it was only one *sab* (about 20 pounds) of grain; in Untsukul it amounted to one ruble.[28] Despite the poverty of the mountaineers, the *kalym* is so insignificant that to classify it under "bride-price" would be incorrect. This is not a case of bride purchase at all, but rather a formality or symbol, which may be at most a *vestige* of actual marriage by purchase.

[22] For the custom among the Chinese see Vanicelli, *La Familia Cinese*, pp. 393—403; among the Germans of the Volga see E. G. Kagarov, "Venčanie pokojnikov u nemcev Povolž'ja," SE, 1936, No. 1, pp. 106 ff. O. Schrader, *Totenhochzeit*, 1904.
[23] Potocki, *op. cit.*, II, p. 127.
[24] B. Dalgat, "Die alte Religion der Tschetschenen," *Anthropos*, III (1908), p. 737.
[25] For instance, F. Nansen, *op. cit.*, p. 104; Byhan, *op. cit.*, p. 191; Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 178.
[26] *op. cit.*, pp. 96, 101. The "bride-price" was therefore only 5 s. 10 d., less than $ 1.00.
[27] Hahn, "Putelestvie v Kachetiju i Dagestan," SMOMPK, XXXI (1902), p. 93.
[28] A. Runovskij, "Kodeks Šamilja," *Voennyi Sbornik*, XXIII (1862), No. 2, p. 347.

583 to assume the character of a dowry, as it had tended much earlier in Daghestan. A bitter struggle is going on between ancient *adats*, the *šarī'a*, and Russian laws.

(3) *Kalym* (even in recent times) is generally high.

[585] (4) Everywhere except among the Ingiloi and the Chechens of Nazran (*supra*, pp. 84, 86) the *kalym* and *kebin* are much higher for a virgin than a non-virgin. Virginity therefore is one of the most important factors in determining the amount of bride wealth.

[614] (5) Generally the family or a larger social group as the sib or *tleush* [581] provide the necessary bride wealth. The groom never has to amass the *kalym* himself, another fact clearly showing that mating is not a private affair.

(6) The *kebin* is found in all North Caucasia and Mohammedan neighbourhood.

[554] (7) Everywhere the social status of the partners is an important factor in determining the amount of *kalym* and *kebin*.

The uniform evolution of the North Caucasian bride purchase is indeed striking. Originally all peoples of North Caucasus seem to have had actual bride purchase: the bride was actually sold and considered as a chattel. Then the bride-price began to lose its character of a purchase, a development contemporaneous with the spread of Islamism and Russian influence. Mohammedanism does not recognize bride purchase as such:[53] it recommends a bridal gift and prescribes the *kebin (mahr)* instead. The Russian Military Government in pre-Soviet times regarded bride purchase as a serious "abuse" and according to a decision of 1857 one third of the bride-price was to become the property of the bride as a form of social security.[54] Later the Soviet Government contributed its share in modifying the custom especially through industrialization, as we have seen is the case of the Cherkess living in the larger cities.[55]

593 That social rank should play such an imporant part in determing the 554 amount of bride wealth (whether bride price, gifts or *kebin*) is quite natural, universal and in full accord with Islamic law.[56] In fact, according to Mohammedan teaching, the *walī mujbir* loses his right to marry his daughter or granddaughter against her will if the bride wealth does not correspond to the girl's social rank.[57]

Nowhere in the Caucasus has bride purchase been considered as something humiliating or degrading. After all, even the Cherkess princesses were purchased. The bride wealth corresponded to the social status and therefore added dignity to the purchase. Moreover, the higher the price the greater the social respect

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[53] Juynboll, *op. cit.*, p. 190. The *mahr* is also called *ṣakāk* in Islamic law.
[54] A. Dirr, AGKB, p. 124.
[55] *Supra*, p. 83.
[56] Juynboll, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
[57] *ibid.*

1 [i.e., bride-price and bride's security against divorce—Analyst]

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Chapter VII

The Wedding

§ 1. DESCRIPTION

The NORTHWESTERN CAUCASIANS. The finest descriptions of the Abkhazian wedding, to my mind, are those of Deržavin and Seidlitz.[1] Unless indicated, our data have been taken from the latter author.

On the appointed day the bridegroom and his attendants hasten to the home of the bride, and after having extended them a hearty welcome, her father solemnly hands her over to the groom. A procession is formed, which then proceeds towards the bride's new home. The Abkhazian bridal song, "Bedniera" ("Happiness"), and continuous pistol salutes fill the air as the horsemen suddenly break into a wild gallop and begin their famous Caucasian *dzhigirt* (riding stunts).

As soon as the wedding procession nears the groom's house, one of the riders gallops ahead. A pistol salute lets all know that the bride is near.

As soon as she reaches the house, an immense round loaf of millet bread is tossed over her head three times, then broken, and eaten by all present.

A bridal arch is formed at the doorway of the house by two men with crossed swords. On the threshold she is given some sugar and honey with the words "May God grant you a tongue as sweet as sugar and honey."[2]

She then crosses the threshold and receives a dish of *ghomi* (millet) and an egg. What the significance of this ceremony may be we are not told. She is then led thrice round the hearth, scattering grains of millet in all directions.

The bride then sits down and a little boy is brought to her. She takes him on her lap, in order that she too may, before long, have the happiness of becoming the mother of a boy.[3]

After this ceremony she is taken to the *amhara* (little house or hut).

On the following day visitors arrive to become acquainted with the bride[4] and to offer her various gifts. An attendant is always at her side to introduce the guests as they come. The veil is lifted from her face as she stands before the visitor motionless, with downcast eyes, and not uttering a single word. If

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[1] N. C. Deržavin, "Iz oblasti kavkazskoj etnografii. Svad'ba v Abchazii," SMOMPK, XXXVI (1906), No. 2, pp. 1—10. N. von Seidlitz, "Die Abchasen," *Globus*, LXVI (1894), No. 3, pp. 40 f. See also Dubrovin's description, *Istorija*, I, ii, pp. 49 ff.

[2] It is most likely the mother of the household who invites the bride to cross the threshold, a custom found also among other peoples of North Caucasus.

[3] *Cf. infra*, p. 205.

[4] Deržavin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

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the guests have any questions, it is her girl-companion that must answer. The bride may at the most nod in affirmation.

She remains in her "hermitage" for some months before she is finally permitted to live with the rest of the household.[5]

The following description is chiefly that of the main Cherkess tribe, the Kabardians.

The *kalym* has been paid and the day of the wedding agreed upon. The relatives of the bridegroom begin the necessary wedding preparations. The odour of steaming beer and of the finest dainties creates a distinctive atmosphere, peculiar to a Kabardian wedding. On the eve of the marriage a group of men gallop through the *aul* inviting relatives to a preparatory feast, on the occasion of which a collection is taken to cover some of the expenses of the coming wedding, e. g., purchase of a veil for the bride, chartering of a bridal wagon.

On the following day young men fully-armed gather at the house of the groom and noisely gallop off to the bride's house. The bridegroom, however, does not go with them but "hides" at his best-man's house.[6] By doing so he becomes temporarily an adopted son *(kan)* of the latter's sib. A young companion called *shatso-kot* must always be at his side to protect him.

When the riders (or to be more exact, the bridal procession) reach the bride's house, her attendant, whom the riders brought along, is taken to the women's quarters, while the rest, after having feasted and danced till late into the night, are given lodging either in the house of the bride or of one of the neighbours.

Immediately after breakfast on the following day, the unusual hustle peculiar to a Cherkess wedding is observed outside the bride's house. The horses are being harnessed, the bride's belongings are being packed carefully but hurriedly into a trunk and put on the specially decorated bridal wagon. The bride herself is inside the house, being attired in her finest clothes. From her hair hangs a long white ribbon reaching to the ground. She is veiled, or rather, wrapped in a large white shawl. Her wedding dress differs but slightly from the ordinary Cherkess dress, except that it is made of more costly material. She is assisted on to the wagon and takes her place next to her ever-faithful girl-attendant. As soon as the bridal procession begins to move, the young men of the *aul*, all on horseback, try to snatch the caps away from the guests and thus begin the usual bridal horseraces. When the more "dignified" part of the procession enters the village of the groom, a wedding song is sung. By this time the racers have rested a bit and are ready to break into another wild chase. They again snatch one another's caps, throwing them on the ground, and as the rider gallops past one of the caps, he tries his skill at shooting a hole through it.

The bride is then taken by two women into the women's quarters, whilst outside the cracks of pistols and guns continue. The bride slowly sits down on a specially prepared bench, covered with a carpet. All eyes are fixed on her as a girl-friend of hers has the honour of removing the shawl.

While the riders outside are enjoying their beer, the youth of the village armed with long poles occupy a place difficult for the horsemen to pass. The

[5] Seidlitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 40 f; Deržavin, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[6] C. Hahn, *Kaukasische Reisen und Studien*, p. 40.

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riders charge wildly, slashing their whips in all directions against their attackers whose task it is to prevent the horsemen form entering the house. The battle continues till the riders finally manage to jump over the fence or to break it down and thus force their way into the house. The " defenders of the bride " throw away their poles and begin dancing with the girls of the village. At noon they all enter the house to congratulate the parents of the groom. Dances commence again and last until midnight.

All this time, as we have already mentioned, the groom is absent, temporarily adopted by a neighbouring sib and guarded day and night by his *shatso-kot*. When the groom retires, the *shatso-kot* must spend the night in the yard protecting the bridegroom against any intruder. Never may he abandon his post. During the day it is his strict obligation to entertain the groom and this he usually does by horseback riding, away from the village. In the evening the two are joined by other companions. Toward midnight all leave except of course the *shatso-kot*, who must now accompany the groom to his bride.[7]

The first three nights, as a part of the wedding ceremony, the groom must undo the bride's stays.[8] Her corset is a broad red leather belt, which is sewed tightly about her waist and is never removed till the wedding night. According to Pallas, the corset was donned when she was 10 or 12 years old,[9] while other explorers claim that the corset was sewed on soon after the bride was born.[10] In any case, she may never take the corset off : it must remain untouched till it bursts and then it must immediately be replaced by another. The husband alone has the right to undo it, on the wedding night. The corset renders the waist very small in proportion to the shoulders, the purpose being to prevent the growth of the breasts, an essential requirement for Cherkess beauty.[11] In some places at least, the custom of wearing such stays has been recently discarded.[12]

Pallas and Ellis in their reports dating from the 18th century claim that the corset is " cut with a dagger, a custom sometimes productive of very fatal accidents."[13] Today untieing and not cutting the stays is the orthodox ceremony with the Cherkess[14] and the Ossetes. To cut them would subject the groom to endless ridicule.[15] Since the custom of *cutting* was " productive of very fatal accidents " we can easily understand why the pratice has been given up. Sometimes the bride's girl-friends maliciously tie a large number of very difficult knots, so that the temptation to make use of the dagger is not slight. On the first three nights the bride is not allowed to say a word to her husband.[16]

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[7] Hahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 40—44. For a description of a wedding among the Temirgoi see Vasil'kov, *op. cit.*, pp. 89—101.

[8] Ladyženskij, FT, p. 191.

[9] P. S. Pallas, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise in die südl. Statth. des russ. Reichs etc.*, I, pp. 380 f.

[10] Ellis, *Memoir of a map etc.*, p. 24.

[11] Pallas, *l. c.*; Ellis, *l. c.*; Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 127. Prof. D. Wölfel has called my attention to a similar practice in Tyrol.

[12] For example, Ladyženskij could not find the practice in Kamenomostki Aul in 1927, FT, p. 191.

[13] Pallas, *op. cit.*, I, p. 381 ; Ellis, *l. c.*

[14] C. Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

[15] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 270.

[16] Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

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565 The Cherkess formerly had a very important ceremony, which however seems no longer to be observed, the virginity test.[17] Formerly if the bride were found to have lost her virginity before her wedding, she would be returned to her father, who would mercilessly mutilate, sell or even kill her.[18]

591 A week later the so-called *unaishe* (i. e., "introducing the young wife into the household") takes place. Up to this time she had to live in her own quarters, but from now on she is considered a full-fledged member of the family. In the midst of much shouting and shooting, songs and cheers, the young wife is led into the house by two women. She is wrapped in a shawl and wears tiny 592 stilts attached to the soles of her shoes, which make her look unusually tall. She enters, stands shyly against the wall and then waits for someone to remove her shawl. Thereupon a woman places with her finger a sweet liquid called *urtsetl* into the mouth of the bride in order that her life in the new household may be ever as sweet as *urtsetl*.[19]

Only women were present in the house when the bride entered. They now all take a drink of beer from a large common vessel, then sing and finally break into a dance till wedding songs are heard from outside. This is a sign for the bride to come out, and as soon as she crosses the threshold, a boy standing on the roof, lets down a shower of confetti, nuts and tiny pasteries.

The bride then retires to her room, while the guests feast, drink and dance.

Some days later a ceremony called "Reconciliation" takes place. The bride's girl-friends take part in dances at the home of the groom while the young men join the bridegroom in his hiding place, where drinking is preferred 608 to dancing. The groom then makes a little speech, thanking his "foster-father" for his kindness, and in return for all the courtesies shown him during his "adoption," he offers him an ox or a horse. The groom has been "hiding" all this time, and now he feels that it is about time for him to seek "reconciliation" with his family. In the meantime a sheep has been slaughtered and beer has been prepared for a feast when the "prodigal son" returns. A special cup of beer sweetened with honey and a little "snack" are waiting for him on a small side-table. All eyes are riveted on the son who "ran away" from home. The young ladies are bunched together in a corner of the room; the old men are likewise huddled against one of the walls; the parents of the groom and an honoured guest, an old man, stand in another corner of the room, while the bride with her girl-friends stands in the doorway. Suddenly the loud voice of the honoured guest calls all to attention. "Dear son," he cries, "you think that you have offended us, but you are mistaken. On the contrary, you have caused us indescribable joy! Come take this drink as a reward! Come, son, drink it and let us forget about the past." The groom rises and slowly approaches the old man, accepts the beer and hands it to his attendant. Thereupon he steps outside of the house where he drinks the beer and together with his companions partakes of the "snacks" After a while he retires, while his companions and guests continue their feasting and dancing till morning.

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[17] Cf. Ladyženskij, FT, p. 184.

[18] Byhan, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

[19] *Urtsetl* is made of sheep's fat or butter mixed with honey.

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The "Reconciliation" however is not yet over. The following morning an *arba* (Caucasian two-wheeled wagon) drawn by two oxen goes through the village and every family before whose house the *arba* halts is obliged to donate a chicken. In the evening a cartload of chickens arrives, destined for a special "Reconciliation" feast exclusively for women, on which occasion the groom by accepting some beer from his mother is finally "reconciled" also with her.

True, the "Reconciliation" may be over, but the marriage ceremonies are not. Two days later there is more feasting, more drinking, and the so-called *shinak-gagerōs* (i. e., "the twirling of a wooden cup with a long handle") take place. The one toward whom the cuphandle points on stopping after having been twirled must drink its contents. The young people who take part in this drink-feast do not leave the groom's home till there is no more beer left to refill the cup. The old folks have their turn in the celebration in the evening, when the young are obliged to serve the old. One of the main features on the programme is the obligation of all the "old-timers" to take a turn at dancing, ending with a dance of the host and hostess, who, however, have the privilege of exemption from dancing if they drink a cup of beer instead. On this occasion the Kabardian minnesingers called *geguako* are especially welcome. They travel from village to village, playing on their two-stringed instruments, singing and composing beautiful lyrics[20] as the German minnesingers and the French and Italian troubadours once used to do. To each well-wishing of the *geguako* the guests answer with a joyful "Amen!," confirming their "So be it!" with a sip of beer.[21]

The ceremony of thrice walking around the hearth constitutes an important part of the Cherkess wedding just as in Abkhazia.[22]

The official marriage contract is made by representatives of the bride and groom in the presence of the local mullah. Holding both representatives by the hand, he first asks the representative of the bride: "Do you take A as husband for B?" The answer is a simple "Yes!" He then asks the representative of the groom: "Do you take B as wife for A?" "Yes!" This interrogation is repeated a second and a third time. The mullah then recites a prayer and all present, raising their hands heavenward, answer "Amen!"[23]

The expenses entailed in such an elaborate wedding would often bring complete economic ruin to the family, much the same as Caucasian funerals. Ladyženskij implies, however, that such expensive weddings are a thing of the past.[24]

The NORTHEASTERN CAUCASIANS. As our example of a Chechen marriage we have chosen that of the Ingushi, for this group of Chechens has preserved much more of their ancient culture than any other. In so doing, however, we must make allowance for tribal differences.

[20] Hahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 46—49, from whom we have also taken the description of the "Reconciliation." Hahn gives us a few examples of these lyrics, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 ff.

[21] Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[22] Dirr, AGKB, p. 25.

[23] Ladyženskij, FT, p. 199.

[24] Ladyženskij, FT, p. 208. See also Dubrovin, *Istorija* for a fairly good description of a Cherkess wedding, I, i, pp. 142 ff, 147 f.

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however, we must make allowance for tribal differences. The Ingush wedding has been described especially well by Jakovlev.[25]

There is excitement in the village,[26] and the whole atmosphere is festive. Before one of the Ingush houses a crowd is gathering, the riders towering above all. There is reason for this excitement and festivity, for a son is being married. Inside the house, too, there is excitement—but perhaps we should call it "activity" instead. A sheep is being slaughtered, *braga* is being brewed, cakes are being baked. But in spite of all this hustle, there seems to be time and reason enough to interrupt all work—just for a moment—the butcher, the brewer, the baker, one and all, go to the door and gaze a moment at the crowd as it begins to form into a semi-orderly wedding procession. At the head we see the proud father of the groom, and behind him his male relatives and some girls. Even billy-goats and rams are there (gifts for the bride's family)—all are there except the groom. He and one of his comrades disappeared several days ago and have not been heard of since. (The bride vanished from her home too, but by now she has most likely returned.) The bridegroom is no doubt "hiding" with a neighbour. The whole village is excited—everybody, we are told, except the groom, for etiquette demands that he act as unconcerned as if marriage were an everyday affair.

Men on horseback, men, women, and noisy children on creaky carts or on foot, wend their way down the dusty village road. When they reach the bride's house her father dashes out in front of the procession and with beaming face welcomes all heartily. The *pandir* (a native three-stringed instrument) begins a joyful wedding tune and all join in the customary marriage songs. Formerly the girls would form into two contending choirs, the friends of the groom against the friends of the bride, alternately singing songs and trying to out-ridicule the other,[27] a veritable battle of tongues and voices.

Singing, dancing, and feasting, continue till evening, when the procession is formed again (but this time not without the bride). The horsemen now gallop off and begin their wild, dangerous wedding races.[28]

As soon as the procession reaches the groom's house, the bride enters the *saklia* and receives some honey and butter, coyly listening to the words "Be thou ever soft as butter and ever sweet as honey."

After this little ceremony she is led behind a curtain where she must remain for the next few days, entertained only by a number of girl-companions.

The formal marriage contract takes place according to the simple Islamic rite. The mullah, as usual, presides, while the parents of the bride and groom make the contract.

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[25] Jakovlev, *Inguši*, pp. 52—56.
See also Dubrovin's description, *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 430—435.

[26] A year or two may elapse after the betrothal, the time of marriage depending mainly on how soon the *kalym* can be paid. Cf. Berže, *Čečnja i Čečency*, p. 98.

[27] For texts of wedding songs see Jakovlev, *l. c.*

[28] Grabovskij, "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt, etc.," p. 21. Horseraces play an important part in funerals throughout the Caucasus. See R. Bleichsteiner, "Rossweihe und Pferderennen im Totenkult der kaukasischen Völker," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, Salzburg-Leipzig, 1936, pp. 414—495.

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Feasting, dancing and singing continue for the next two or three days. The guests are especially fond of their version of the *Lesghinka*.[29]

The newly-weds may not see each other till toward the close of the festivities. Finally the clapping of hoofs, cracks of pistols, and deep manly voices announce the return of the groom from his "hiding" place. He enters the bridal chamber, where his wife is waiting for him. The heart of a sheep, daintily roasted, lies hidden somewhere in the room. The groom or the bride begins to search for it and when found it is eaten by both. This little ceremony is to ensure marital concord.[30]

Jakovlev fails to mention two ceremonies which older authors include as important parts of a Chechen wedding. First of all, there is the custom of placing a child on the bride's lap with the wish that she too may before long give birth to a boy and become the mother of many children. Then there is the custom of walking round the hearth three times, a custom found among the Cherkess, Abkhaz, Ossetes, and the Ingushi,[31] but, as it seems, not among the other Chechens.

After the wedding the father of the bridegroom receives various gifts from the guests, sometimes enough to cover the expenses of the wedding.[32]

When speaking of the Lesghian group we shall not describe the customs of each people separately, but, as we have done in the section on engagements, we shall endeavour to present what may be called a *typical* Lesghian wedding. We shall borrow much from Kovalevskij's *Zakon i obyčaj na Kavkaze* (II, pp. 185—188), a description based on two reliable sources, L'vov and Bašir Dalgat, a native Caucasian. Though L'vov's article[33] is easily available, Dalgat's precious manuscript is not, and hence our recourse to Kovalevskij is mainly to get at Dalgat's valuable material. These two sources describe the Avarian and Dargwa marriage customs, but as Kovalevskij rightly points out, the description, except for a few accidentals, holds for *all* Lesghians. Other good articles on the present subject, which we shall use to complement Kovalevskij's two sources, are those of Gabiev, describing the wedding customs of the Laks,[34] of G.M. Amirov, describing the customs in North Daghestan,[35] of Fon-Plotto describing the Lesghians of Sakataly,[36] of Dubrovin describing the

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[29] The *Lesghinka* is a popular Caucasian dance, which originated, as its name implies, in Daghestan, and then was borrowed by all mountain tribes of the Caucasus, each tribe, of course, adding an original touch to the dance.

[30] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 237.

[31] Dirr, AGKB, p. 25; Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 433.

[32] These contributions are perhaps of a relatively recent origin, as a result of Russian legislation against costly weddings.
The explorers are silent about the presence or absence of a proof of virginity. Even though the practice perhaps does not exist today, the possibility of its former existence cannot be denied, especially since the Ingush customs are very similar to those of the Ossetes.

[33] "Domašnjaja i semejnaja žizn Dagestanskich Gorcev," SSKG, III (1870), pp. 1—32.

[34] "Laki, Ich prošloe i byt," SMOMPK, XXXVI (1906), pp. 109 f.

[35] "Sredi gorcev severnago Dagestana," SSKG, VII (1873), pp. 31 f.

[36] "Priroda i ljudi Zakatal'skago Okruga," SSKG, IV (1871), pp. 31—44. Though the marriage Fon-Plotto describes is really that of the Georgian Ingiloi, according to the author's own observation, it is identical with that of all non-Georgians in Sakataly.

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585 customs of Lesghians in general,[37] and, finally, Halil Beg Mussayassul's description in his *Das Land der letzten Ritter*.[38]

The wedding day has finally arrived and all acquaintances and relatives have been invited. The young people begin to assemble at the groom's house quite early in the morning, while the older people do not make their appearence till the arrival of the bride. After feasting and dancing has begun at the groom's house, two men and two women—usually relatives of the groom—are commissioned to bring the bride to her new home.[39] In the Province of Kazikumukh usually 10 to 15 persons of each sex are sent;[40] in Sakataly, four to twelve.[41] In a similar manner, the bride chooses four persons from among her relatives, two uncles, called *varkhkani* ("fellow-travellers") and two aunts, called *kakurtsanti* ("they who lead the bride by the hand").[42] The procession, or the delegation, as the case may be, proceeds to the house where the bride is staying at the time. (In Avaria, she is at one of her relative's, whereas in Dargwa and Kazikumukh Province, she is always at home.[43]) On arriving, the delegation solemnly extend to the bride a triple invitation to join them.[44]

After the guests have been entertained, the bridal procession begins to move slowly in the direction of the groom's house. Some boys are at the head of the procession carrying lighted torches, for generally the procession does not begin before dusk. Other children, noisier than ever, carry the bride's wedding gifts (usually kitchen utensils).[45] During the whole procession the two aunts are constantly at the bride's side, living up to their name *kakvurtsanti*, "they who lead the bride by the hand."[46]

Though dressed in beautiful silk, the bride must not be too particular about keeping her wedding gown spotless, an impossible task indeed. When the procession passes under a window, a handful of flour is poured on her,[47] a custom which, according to Dalgat's manuscript, signifies "luck as pure as the flour that is poured on the bride."[48]

Almost at every bend of the road, or wherever the road narrows down, there is a crowd of village urchins and young people who obstruct the way and
[273] will not permit the procession to continue till they receive some of their favourite *buza*[49] and dainties.[50]

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[37] *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 566—573.
[38] Munich, 1936, pp. 169—175.
[39] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 185.
[40] Gabiev, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
[41] Fon-Plotto, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 f.
[42] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*, Amirov, *op. cit.*, p. 31, calls them *kakvurtsanti*, *kak* meaning "hand" and *vutsis meaning* "to hold."
[43] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*
[44] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, pp. 185 f.
[45] Amirov, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Gabiev, *l. c.*
[46] Amirov, *l. c.* Kovalevskij, *l. c.* In Sakataly, according to Kovalevskij's own observation, the bride rides on a horse led by the bride's maternal uncle (Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 186).
[47] Amirov, *l. c.* Kovalevskij, *l. c.*
[48] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*
[49] *Buza* is a kind of beer: millet is brewed and allowed to ferment, after which honey is added.
[50] Amirov, *l. c.*; Kovalevskij, *l. c.*

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As soon as the procession reaches the bridegroom's house, his mother takes a plate of honey and smears some on the bride's lips and extends her an official invitation to enter.[51] The honey symbolizes the readiness of the mother-in-law to offer the bride any and every gift, but especially the greatest gift of all, entrance into the household.[52] A pleasant and sweet life awaits her in such friendly surroundings.

Now an ox (or any other head of large cattle)[53] is led before the bride. The ear of the animal is then cut as a sign that from now on it belongs to the bride alone.[54] If the bride stands motionless in the doorway, everyone understands that the bride is still not satisfied and therefore a second animal must be brought before her and its ear must be cut in a similar manner. Sometimes a horse is presented to her instead of two oxen, in which case a clump of hair is cut off the horse's tail, leaving the ear intact.[55] On accepting these gifts, the bride is congratulated, welcomed, honoured with songs and pistol shots, and is then solemnly led across the threshold of the *saklia* by her mother-in-law. Sometimes, as the bride steps over the threshold, the bridegroom, standing behind the door, gives his wife three slight strokes[56] symbolizing his authority over her.[57]

The programme now calls for a tug of war between the villagers and the members of the groom's household. A carpet (the one the bride stepped on when crossing the threshold) is placed between the two groups, everyone taking as good a hold of it as possible and then pulling with all his strength, the villagers pulling away from the house and the others toward it. This is, doubtless, a form of ceremonial bride capture. The winners receive a special delicasy called *airisa*, a mixture of flour, butter and honey, as well as their favourite drink *buza*, while the losers must be satisfied with the drink.[58]

There are two other forms of ceremonial bride capture, found among other Lesghians. In Dido-land the friends of the groom "break" into the bride's house, throw a sheep-skin over her head, and drag her into the street, where the villagers throw filth at her till she reaches her new home. The Andi of T'indi are supposed to have had the following custom: the bride riding on a horse, accompanied by men and women armed with torches and long poles, rides toward the groom who is similarly guarded. When the two groups meet, a mock battle is declared. The parties must try to extinguish each other's torches. In

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[51] Kovalevskij, *l. c.* Amirov omits this ceremony.

[52] This is Kovalevskij's interpretation. Unfortunately our sources fail to mention whether the mother-in-law accompanies her action with words as in the case of other North Caucasians or not.

[53] Amirov, *op. cit.*, p. 31, who mentions the possibility of presenting a horse instead of two oxen.

[54] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*; Amirov, *l. c.*

[55] Amirov, *l. c.*

[56] Kovalevskij, Zakon, II, p. 186.

[57] Amirov's and Kovalevskij's interpretation.

[58] Amirov, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 f.

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585 [583] the meantime the bride is handed over to the female relatives of the groom, who bring her to her new home.[59]

Honey is given to the bride a second time, symbolizing the sweetness of married life that one and all wish her.

[606] The bride then sits down on a special bridal chair, and a kettle is placed at her feet as a sign of her subjection to the mother of the household.[60]

The custom of thrice walking round the hearth, the custom that plays such an important role in the Abkhaz, Cherkess, Ossete, and Ingush marriage,[61] is found also among the Lesghians, but, as it seems, only by way of exception. Kovalevskij found it only in one *aul* near the Georgian border.[62]

Toward midnight, when the banqueting has finished, a brother of the bride is given the honour of unveiling her face, her head remaining veiled till she enters the bridal chamber. For this privilege her brother is obliged to bestow a special gift on her.[63, 64]

She now steps into the bridal chamber, while the young people crowd in after her. Whoever succeeds in being the first to throw himself on the bed receives some pastries as prize. This ceremony is called *vurui varis*, that is, "trampling on the bed."[65]

As soon as the groom enters, all leave the room and while the newly-weds are alone, feasting and merry-making continue till morning.[66]

In some parts of Daghestan, as for example in Samur Province, two relatives stand guard at the door of the bridal chamber. On the following day the *testimonium castitatis*, a cloth or a bed sheet, is given to the guards[67] or, in some places, the young husband fires his gun. However, a pistol shot does not always have the same meaning. In Dargwa Province (in the shamkhalate of Tsrk and in the khanate of Mekhtali) it signifies that the bride's hymen has been found perforated;[68] in Sakataly it has the very opposite signification.[69] If the bride is found unchaste, the husband may dismiss her at once, on her very wedding day, retaining all her gifts and dowry. Formerly her angry father would cut off her nose or arm and even kill her.[70]

The wedding may last for another week.[71]

On the seventh day a feast is prepared for an exclusive group of male relatives, on which occasion the groom's father reveals what gift he intends to bestow on his newly married son. (The women relatives hold their own feast.)

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[59] Byhan, *La civilisation caucasienne*, pp. 191 f.
[60] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 187.
[61] Dirr, AGKB, p. 25.
[62] Kovalevskij, *l. c.*
[63] Amirov, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[64] The Laks call it *lyazbinkuku* (Kovalevskij, *l. c.*).
[65] Kovalevskij, *l. c.* Amirov calls it *burush-vachis*: *burush* meaning "bad" and *vachis* meaning "trample on."
[66] Gabiev, *op. cit.*, p. 110; Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 187; Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 571.
[67] "Adaty Južno-Dagestanskich Obščestv," SSKG, VIII (1875), p. 72.
[68] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 174.
[69] *ibid.* See also Kovalevskij, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 187 f; Gabiev, *op. cit.*, p. 110; Amirov, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[70] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 201.
[71] Gabiev, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

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Some time later, usually not over a month, the relatives of the groom are invited by the bride's family to dinner. One of the guests—we may still speak of wedding guests, for the wedding celebration is not yet over—calls out to the bride's father: "What will the father of our bride offer her?" On this occasion he must determine what portion of land he intends for his daughter. In Dargwa the minimum dowry is $^1/_8$ of a desyatnik, but he usually gives her other things as well, a cow, a buffalo and other cattle.[72]

The bride on her part presents the guests with some souvenirs—belts for male relatives and handkerchiefs for her female relatives.[73]

The formal marriage contract takes place according to the Mussulman rite before the mullah and witnesses.[74]

The Lesghian marriage usually does not take place immediately after the engagement but months and sometimes even years later.[75] The marriage season for maidens is autumn, whereas widows may marry at any time.[76]

Marriages of widows and widowers take place without solemnities of any kind.[77]

TABLE 15

Major Wedding Customs of Northern Caucasians Found Also Among the Southerners

Customs*	Tribe**	Source
Procession terminates in *groom's* house	Khevsurs	Eristov, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
	Pshavs	Dubrovin, I, ii, p. 310.
	Ingiloi	Fon-Plotto, op. cit., pp. 31—34.
Ceremonial bride capture	Khevsurs	Mourier, *Guide au Caucase*, I, p. 153; Nansen, *op. cit.*, pp. 57 f; Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 237.
Mother-in-law gives honey to bride (and groom)	Pshavs	S. I. Makalatija, "Iz starogo narodnogo byta pšavov," SE, 1938, No. 1, p. 105.
Walking thrice around hearth; best-man strikes chain with dagger	Khevsurs	Dubrovin, I, ii, p. 311.
	Pshavs	*ibid*; Eristov, *op. cit.*, p. 112; Makalatija, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
Proof of virginity	Ingiloi	Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 174.
Formal (religious) contract	Khevsurs	Eristov, *op. cit.*, p. 110; Hahn, *Bilder aus dem Kaukasus*, p. 82.
	Tushi	Dubrovin, I, ii, p. 311.
	Pshavs	Byhan, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

[72] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 188. [73] *ibid.*

[74] Svěčin, "Očerk narodonaselenija, nravov i obyčaev Dagestana," ZKO, II (1853), p. 64.

[75] L'vov, *op. cit.*, p. 22. [76] Amirov, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

[77] *ibid.*

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585 * See also T. Mtavriev, "Prostonarodnaja svad'ba v Kachetii," SMOMPK, XXXI (1902), No. 3, pp. 154—160.

For Gurian customs: N. Deržavin, Svad'ba u Gurijcev-Musul'man v okrestnostjach Batuma," SMOMPK, XXXI (1902), No. 2, pp. 168—176.

For Pshav customs see: Makalatija, "Iz starogo narodnogo byta pšavov," SE, 1938, No. 1, pp. 105—109.

** The tribes in this column are intended merely to serve as *examples*. We do not wish to imply that the particular custom is not found anywhere else except among the tribes indicated.

The OSSETINE wedding customs are quite interesting and have been fully described by such authors as Kovalevskij,[78] Baddeley,[79] Hahn,[80] Šanaev,[81] and Gatiev.[82] Without going into detail we shall indicate briefly the similarity between the Ossetine wedding and that of the neighbouring North Caucasians.

(1) The *procession* terminates at the home of the groom. The bride is led by her groomsman (*anshuargin*) and a special female attendant (*dzhinarkinmade*).[83]

(2) The formal contract is made in church before their priests in Christian parts of Ossetia,[84] and according to Islamic ritual among the Mohammedans. Both Christian and Mohammedan marriages may take place in the shade of certain holy trees.[85]

[583] (3) Dramatization of bride-stealing.[86]

(4) The bride and groom are not allowed to meet during the marriage festivities: the bride must remain in her room, attended to by a number of girl-friends, while the groom is living with the best-man.[87]

[606] (5) Submission to the mother-in-law. In the evening the bride is led to the hearth, where she must first bow to the *avsin* (mother of the household) and then smear some fat on the *avsin's* shoes as a sign of submission.[88]

585 842 (6) A child is placed on her lap, as a wish of her friends that she may give birth to many children, especially boys.[89] She is taken to a shrine of Mairem.

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[78] Kovalevskij, *Sovremmenyj obyčaj i drevnij zakon.*

[79] Baddeley, *The Rugged Flanks of Caucasus.*

[80] Hahn, *Bilder aus dem Kaukasus*, pp. 41 ff.

[81] Šanaev, "Svad'ba u severnych Osetin," ("A Wedding among the North Ossetes"), SSKG, IV (1870), pp. 1—30.

[82] Gatiev, "Sueverija i predrazudki u Osetin," SSKG, IX (1876), pp. 18—21. See also: Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 334—337; "Koe-čto o Digorcach," *Kavkaz* (1887), No. 339 f.

[83] Byhan, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

[84] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 268.

[85] Nansen, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

[86] Kovalevskij, *Costume contemp.*, 168 f.

[87] Šanaev, *op. cit.*, p. 27, *note 13*. Cf. also N. Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 336.

[88] Gatiev, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Položaev, Gorcy severnago Kavkaza, p. 106.

[89] Kovalevskij, *Costume contemp.*, p. 185.

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The village children accompany her and then throw stones at the shrine, crying, "So many boys (as these missiles) and one blue-eyed girl grant thou, Mairem, to this our dear bride!" The groomsman must then repeat this prayer.[90]

(7) The Ossetes also have the corset-ceremony *(supra,* p. 113). The groom must *untie* the knots and not cut them.[91]

(8) The best-man takes the bride by the hand and walks round the fireplace three times, each time striking the chain with his sword.[92]

(9) The mother-in-law gives the bride some honey.[93]

(10) Feasting lasts two full days and longer. The wedding is elaborate and expensive.[94]

(11) The proof of virginity is rigorously insisted upon.[95]

(12) The bride receives gifts from her own father and guests.[96]

(13) The groomsman drives evil spirits away by holding a club over the bride's head.[97]

And now, a word about the neighbouring TURKS. The Kumykian marriage hardly differs from that of the Lesghians.[98] The dramatization of bride capture is found, for example, among the Karachai[99] and Nogai;[100] the fireplace ceremony is found as far south as the Kurds;[101] some Tartars have the custom of placing a boy on the bride's lap.[102]

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[91] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 158. See *infra*, p. 205.
E. G. Pčelina, "Rodil'nye obyčai u Osetin," SE, 1937, No. 4, p. 86.

[91] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 270. Older writers speak of *cutting* the knots, e. g., Klaproth, *Voyage au Mont Caucase et en Géorgie*, II, p. 250.

[92] Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, pp. 49, 170 f; Gatiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 18 f; Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 325.

[93] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 268.

[94] Leontovič, II, pp. 51, § 18, *note 4*. The military government tried to limit the number of guests from 120 to 15. Cf. Dirr, AGKB, p. 113.

[95] Klaproth, *op. cit.*, II, p. 249.

[96] Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, pp. 198 f.

[97] Kovalevskij, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

[98] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 638.

[99] Jankó, *Népraizi* etc. Zichy's *Kaukazusi és középazsiai utazásai*, p. 44.

[100] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 278 f. In Balkaria the best-man enters the bride's home to fetch the bride, but as soon as he enters the house the women present defend the bride by trying to cut the best-man's cherkesska (Caucasian outer garment), see N. A. Karaulov, "Bolkari na Kavkaze," SMOMPK, XXXVIII (1908), No. 1, p. 146.

[101] Jankó, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

[102] Mir-Galim-bek-Vezirov, Nëskolko svëdënij o Tatarskich pover'jach," SMOMPK, IX (1890), No. 2, p. 11.
For a full description of a Kumykian wedding see: N. Semenov, "Očerki narodnych obyčaev, Kumykov Terskoj Oblasti," *Terskij Sbornik*, II (1892), No. 2, Part 2, pp. 71 ff.
For Nogai wedding see: Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 277 ff.
For wedding of the Turkomans see: A. A. Volodin, "Truchmenskaja step i truchmeny," SMOMPK, XXXVIII (1908), No. 1, pp. 45—49.

TABLE 16

Marriage Ceremonies of N. Caucasians And Neighbours

Marriage Ceremonies	Procession			Dramatization of capture	Horse-racing	Both sibs (families) present	Groom absent for large part of wedding	Segregation of bride during wedding	Bride's submission to husband	Wedding elaborate, expensive with much feasting & dancing	Mother-in-law †			Corset ceremony	Proof of Virginity	Child placed on bride's lap	Special wishes for boys	Fire-place ceremony	Gifts to bride from own sib	"Tramping on bed" ceremony	Sword placed over bride's head	Special attendant for groom	Special attendant for bride	Mother plays important rôle	Maternal uncle important rôle	Formal religious contract	Reconciliation ceremony	Predominant Character of Ceremonies
	From groom's house to bride	Return with bride to groom's house	Groom is absent								Invites bride to cross threshold	Offers bride some honey	Bride's submission to														
Abkhaz	+	+	–		+	+		+		+	+	+		+		+	+	+	+	–	+		+	–	–	+		Pastoral
Cherkess	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	–	+	+	+	–	–	+	+	Pastoral
Ingushi	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+			~	+	+	+	+	–		+	+	–	–	+		Pastoral
Other Chechens	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+				+	+	?	+	–		+	+	–	–	+		Pastoral
Avars	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+	+		+	·		?	+	+		+	+	+	–	+		Pastoral + Agrarian
Dargwa	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+	+		+			?	+	+		+	+	+	–	+		Pastoral + Agrarian
Other Lesghians	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+	+		+				+	+		+	+	+	–	+		Pastoral + Agrarian
Khevsurs	+	+		+		+									+			+		–				+	–	+		Pastoral + Agrarian
Pshavs *	+	+	–		·	+				+	+	+			+		+	+	+	–		+	+	+	–	+		Pastoral + Agrarian
Tushi												+													+	+		
Ingiloi	+	+													+									+	–			
Ossetes	+	+		+		+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+	+	–	+	+	+	–	–	+		Pastoral
Karachai				+																								

* Cf. Makalatija. "Iz starogo narodnogo byta Pšavov," SE, 1938, No. 1, pp. 105.

† It is usually the mother-in-law.

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§ 2. PROBLEMS AND CONCLUSIONS

Though the wedding ceremonies just described are not without a few traces of a mother-right culture, the wedding as a whole is doubtless typically patriarchal in character.

(1) The wedding procession clearly shows that the marriage is patrilocal, a fact true of all North Caucasian as well as neighbouring tribes. The bride must move into the house of her father-in-law.

(2) The fact that the bride is humiliated before her mother-in-law (not father-in-law), the fact that she is invited into the household by the mother-in-law (not father-in-law), and that it is the mother-in-law (not father-in-law) who places the honey into the mouth of the bride, though very suspiciously matriarchal, is reconcilable with a strictly patriarchal society. Even in a strictly patriarchal society the mother of the household enjoys certain privileges and is looked upon as the mistress of the house with special authority over the female members of the household. In other words, in these seemingly matriarchal ceremonies the mother-in-law may perhaps be simply excercising a right of the mother of the household of a typical patriarchal family.[103]

(3) The dramatization of bride capture is a very common custom among the pastoral peoples throughout the world.

Ceremonial bride capture must not be considered as a survival of actual marriage by capture. This is especially true of the Caucasians because a wedding always means a great economic loss for the bride's family—one of their workers must leave them and go over to another sib. Ceremonial bride capture expresses rather the opposition to such an heavy loss. The Dido, as we have seen, actually throw mud and filth at the bride after she has been "stolen". If the ceremony were to represent actual abduction, why should the bride be so "mistreated"? The reason why filth is thrown at her is that she has turned "traitor" to her own family.

(4) The ceremony of hiding, veiling of the face, the bride's taciturnity—all these little peculiarities of the Caucasian wedding may be an expression of the bride's natural sense of modesty. Till now she had to avoid, at least in public, the slightest communication with her financé. The strict separation of engaged couples, the prohibition even to pass a glance at one's future mate in public, and the death penalty imposed on the girl for pre-marital intercourse—all this is in full accord with the high esteem of pastoral peoples for the physical integrity of virgins. At the wedding, the bride is being publicly introduced into a relationship which she has been taught to shun as disgraceful, even punishable by death. Now this once "disgraceful" thing is being done publicly! The bride's resistence, her fleeing, her veiling, her taciturnity, then, are expressions of a reaction against "the great change"[104] from maidenhood to wife, a change more sensibly felt among pastoral peoples than in any other society.

[103] For the relatively important rôle of a mother of a household in a patriarchal society see E. Pčelina, "Obrjad gostepriimstva v Osetii," SE, (1932), No. 5—6, pp. 140—163, especially p. 156, note.

[104] "The great change," I think, has been coined by Elsie C. Person. See her "Holding back in Crisis Ceremonialism," *American Anthropologist*, n. s. XVIII (1916), pp. 44 f.

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to wife, a change more sensibly felt among pastoral peoples than in any other society.

(5) The virginity test, too, though not restricted to pastoral peoples,[105] is very characteristic of their culture. The North Caucasians, all with only the Chechens as possible exception,[106] still have, or at least have had, the virginity test as an essential part of the wedding. The marriage remained uncertain till the bride passed or failed this examination.

It would certainly be of great interest to discover the meaning of and motive behind this practice. There is, of course, no universal explanation for the custom. What motivated the Nigerian tribes to introduce the practice need not be identical with the motives of the Chinese of Kwangtong or of the tribes of Samoa, of the Sakalavas of Madagascar or of the Slavs.

To understand the Caucasian virginity test we must put aside our Western notions regarding the value of the physical integrity of a bride and try to get behind the mind of the North Caucasian, behind the economic, social, and religious standards of the *Caucasians*.

Negatively stated, the virginity test of the Caucasians is in itself no proof of a high esteem for the *virtue* of chastity, for even if it can be proven that the loss of corporal integrity was caused by an accident, the value of the bride seems not to differ from the girl who lost it through actual illicit intercourse. Among the Akhvakh (Daghestanians) a guest or lover might do to a maiden what he wished provided that the hymen remained intact.[107]

Since the perpetuation of the family property and especially of the family cult depends on legitimate male children, there will always be uncertainty about the fatherhood of the first male child if the hymen is found perforated before the consummation of marriage. The groom's family would be constantly haunted by the thought that a stranger (the first-born male child) may become the head of the family. In a word, the economic and religious importance of the first-born male child may have been responsible for the high esteem for virginity and for the necessity of a proof of virginity on the wedding night.[108]

This attitude toward the inviolateness of the maidenhead has been, no doubt, responsible for many other Caucasian observances. The *kalym*, for example, is much higher for a maiden than a widow or divorcée. This fact, in

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[105] For a large number of examples and bibliography see Briffault, *The Mothers*, III, pp. 333—345. See also Schmidt-Koppers, *Völker und Kulturen*, pp. 209 f.

[106] But even here we do not have a positive proof for the non-existence of the virginity test. Mere silence of older authors is *indicative* of the absence of the practice, but it certainly is no proof. The neighbouring Ossetes, Tartars and Mountain Georgians have the custom too.

[107] An accidental rupture of the hymen is much more frequent in the Caucasus than one might be inclined to believe. From early childhood the girl is obliged to do difficult work, to carry heavy loads, to climb and slide down steep, rocky slopes, covered with briers, etc., which might at any unexpected moment rob the girl of her most valued possession. Dubrovin, after referring to these possibilities, points out that frequent ritual washing, which begins quite early in life, can explain many a case too (*Istorija*, I, i, p. 572). For the practice of the Akhvakh, see *infra*, pp. 181 f.

[108] A similar explanation has been suggested by Briffault for the custom in various parts of the world. In any case, it does explain the practice among the Caucasians.

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turn, must have stimulated the entire family to watch most carefully over the conduct of their daughters; and this watchfulness, again, must have been responsible for *adats* threatening the girl as well as any lover with the most severe sanctions not only for an actual perforation of the hymen but also, as the *adats* frequently express it, for any "suspicious approach."[109]

There have been other explanations offered for the virginity test. Westermarck, for instance, suggested masculine jealousy.[110] But this explanation is not applicable to the peoples of North Caucasia, for, as we have already mentioned, the sexual factor has very little significance in the selection of mates compared to the all-important economic, social, and religious factors. Such a jealousy, where mutual attraction matters so little, is unthinkable.[111]

(6) The custom of the bride thrice walking round the fireplace is an ancient wedding ceremony frequently found among pastoral tribes. As is well known, it was also the custom of the ancient Indo-Europeans. That one of the main wedding ceremonies in the Caucasus should take place at the fireplace is quite in keeping with the deep religious significance of the hearth. Among a large number of Caucasian mountain tribes, especially in North Ossetia, Ingushetia, and Daghestan, we find the custom of never allowing the fire in the hearth to die out, this practice being a form of cult for the dead.[112] The fire and especially the chain above it constitute a connection between the living and the departed. It forms a sacred asylum for any murderer, because as soon as he touches the chain the ancestors of the victim approve of the murderer's adoption into the family. The chain is the symbol of the family: to tear it down is regarded as one of the most abominable crimes imagineable, an insult to the living and dead members of the sib, which must be punished with death. The chain is a symbol of the family and therefore it must be buried with the last member of an extinct sib. To swear by the hearth-chain is an infallible sign that the person is saying the truth, for to do so falsely is unthinkable.[113] Such an oath would be a curse upon the entire sib and their ancestors. In other words, the ancient solidarity of the sib is intimately connected with the ancient religion of the North Caucasians, and the sanctuary of this religion is the hearth. Now, marriage is an act by which a stranger is taken into the family, and one of the most natural means, most in harmony with the ancient Caucasian form of life, is the hearth and hearth-chain. It is indeed striking that in Daghestan the cult of the fireplace still exists today but not the wedding ceremony. This fact confirms rather than disproves our explanation, for in Daghestan the wife was not a stranger: she had to be chosen from within the sib! (Cf. *supra*, pp. 51 f.)

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[109] *Infra*, Chapter XII, p. 176.

[110] The History of Marriage, I, p. 163.

[111] The jealousy would have to be so great that the disappointed husband would insist that the bride's nose be cut off or that she be otherwise mutilated and even killed, for such are the ancient adats!

[112] Günther, "Zusammenstöße zwischen Gesetz und Gewohnheitsrecht im nördlichen Kaukasus," *Zeitschrift f. vergl. Rechtsw.*, XLVI (1931), p. 324.

[113] *ibid.*

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585 [776] (7) In a number of instances we have noticed that the dagger or sword was used in connection with the marriage ceremony. The best-man took the bride around the hearth and each time he struck the chain with his dagger. The bride had to enter her new home under an arch of swords or with a dagger or club held above her head. This wedding custom, too, has a religious basis. The household gods of the bride's family have become exceedingly jealous of the bride, because by marrying she has united herself to another family and will now worship other ancestors, abandoning her own. These jealous godlets realize that the best time to enter her new home and to cause countless harm is simultaneously with the bride. Fortunately, these household gods are afraid of daggers.[114] Among the Georgian mountaineers, a mother after having given birth to a child will keep a sword under the pillow as a protection against aerial spirits.[115] Spirits are afraid of the sword for several reasons—at least such is our conjecture. The God of Iron, of the Sword, and of the Hearth-Chain is one and the same god, called Safa. This sword ceremony may perhaps insure [844] [823] Safa's protection against jealous godlets. It may also insure the protection of [769] the departed because *iron* is a means of contacting ancestors. In Ossetia on the [787] "feast of the dedication of clothing" clothes are consecrated and sent to the netherworld by means of an iron knife.[116] The Ingushi get in contact with their departed by means of iron tongs.[117]

(8) The other marriage ceremonies are likewise mainly pastoral in character: horse-racing, submission to the husband, wishes for a rich progeny but always with a disproportion of "nine boys to every blue-eyed girl." Finally, the long elaborate and expensive wedding itself is typical of pastoral peoples.

[606] There are, however, a few traces of a so-called mother-right culture. The rôle played by the mother-in-law in the ceremonies, as we have stressed (*supra*, p. 125), is indeed not inconsistent with the position of the mother of the household in a patriarchal family, but, we must admit that their astounding importance gives them a suspiciously matriarchal colouring: in the ceremonies described, it is the Lesghian mother who welcomes the bride into the house as if she were the head of the family. It is the mother who holds her by the hand as she crosses the threshold. It is the mother's brother who led the bride's horse in the Ingiloi procession from her home to that of her groom. It is the mother who puts the honey into the mouth of the bride as a sign that the bride has a sweet life ahead of her under such an amiable mistress as her mother-in-law. And we should not forget that in the Lesghian engagement it was the mother who presented the engagement gifts which concluded the betrothal contract.[118]

595 585 114 We cannot conclude this chapter without briefly refuting some of Kovalevskij's assumptions. Like so many anthropologists of his day, he was inclined to find traces of an epoch older than that of patriarchy, and older than that of

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[114] For the custom among the Ossetes see Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, pp. 170 f.

[115] Cf. Reinegg, *op. cit.*, II, p. 112 f.

[116] Kokiev, *Slepovye soeruženija*, (Vladikavkaz, 1928), p. 38.

[117] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, II, p. 120.

[118] *Supra*, p. 103.

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matriarchy, even where there were no such traces to be found. The fact that the bride is segregated during the wedding and no older relative of the bridegroom (especially no *male* relative) may see and speak freely with the bride is supposed to be a clear vestige of fraternal polyandry. In other words, there is supposed to have been a time when all male members of the family had access to the bride, for she was the wife of all. Then came a time when, from experience, the Caucasians came to the conclusion that individual marriage was by far better than group marriage or fraternal polyandry. It was, of course, as we are told, not easy to abolish such a deeply ingrained custom, so that the bride had to be kept away from the others. Today the segregation of the bride is supposed to be nothing but a vestige of the means taken against group marriage or fraternal polyandry.[119]

But if that were the case, why is the *groom* hiding, and in fact, even longer and farther away than the bride? Is that a vestige of a kind of sororal polygyny? Moreover, why is the groom hiding *elsewhere*? The best defense against anyone approaching the bride would be if the husband himself were at her side.

Another vestige of group marriage, according to Kovalevskij's fancy, is the ceremony of "tramping on the bed." After the unveiling of the bride, as she is being led into the marriage chamber, all the young people rush in and the first to throw himself on the bed receives a prize. So as not to be accused of mere destructive criticism, we wish here to propose another conjecture (nothing more than a conjecture!), but a conjecture far more plausible than that of Kovalevskij. It is much more probable that we have here a vestige of the *jus primae noctis*. First of all, the ceremony of "tramping on the bed" takes place immediately *before* the groom enters the bridal chamber. If it were a vestige of group marriage or fraternal polyandry, why doesn't the main person take part in the ceremony? Moreover, the *jus primae noctis*, though very often reserved for the chief or father-in-law, is sometimes a privilege reserved for the strongest wedding-guest. In our case, the struggle among the young people to enter the bridal chamber first may be a vestige of a contest to prove who among them is the strongest. The remarkable fact is that in *neighbouring* Southern Russia, until rather recently, it was precisely the strongest wedding-guest who was given the task of deflowering the bride.[120] The Caucasians could have had a similar custom (perhaps even from the same source), which, however, evolved into a ceremony the significance of which has been forgotten.

From among all the juridical aspects of the ceremonies described, the most important is: Which ceremony constitutes the essence of marriage? In other words, at which point of the complicated wedding are the mates actually married? Naturally, where Christian or Mohammedan formal contracts are made, there is usually no doubt about the answer. But we are interested in customary law. Negatively, the marriage is certainly considered complete after the marital act has taken place. To say anything more positive in regard to

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[119] Cf. Kovalevskij, *Coutume contemp.*, p. 177.

[120] O. Asboth, "Ein Hochzeitsbrauch in Südrussland," *Archiv für Anthropologie*, XIII, pp. 318 f.

586 this important question is impossible. The proof of virginity may eventually be the essential element, or perhaps, the fireplace ceremony, whereby the bride pays her respects to the groom's ancestors and is formally taken into the new household. Only after very detailed and exact field work has been done among the different tribes can we ever hope to answer this important question.

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842 very special festivities take place. Shooting, feasting, and dancing mark the birth
[844] of a boy; whereas no special festivities take place if a girl is born. Women, of course, come to congratulate the mother, at the same time not forgetting to console her.[16]

[574] All Lesghian peoples prefer boys too. The first one to announce the good news of the birth of a *boy* receives a reward.[17] The Avars have the courious custom according to which anyone to whom a *son* (not however a daughter) was born in the past year has to give a special feast to his neighbours in spring.[18]

The SOUTHERN CAUCASIANS. The Pshavs frequently pray and offer numerous sacrifices for the blessing of a male child, and if these supernatural means fail, there is only one thing left to do—marry a second wife, who is "capable" of giving birth to boys.[19] At a Pshav wedding the *khevis-beri* ("The Elder of the Valley") prays: "George, Angel of the Oak, grant thou a boy to
[847] the parents of a girl and another boy to the parents of a boy..."[20] Dubrovin reported that among the Georgian mountaineers baby girls were killed immediately after birth because they believed that by doing so the next child would infallibly be a boy. One could come across families who had killed as many as five girls.[21]

The OSSETES have an unusual longing for male children. Thus, for example, the Digorians are greatly disappointed when a girl is born, and this disappointment is expressed sometimes in very irreverent words by the woman-attendant. "May Mairan (Mary) be struck blind for not making you a boy! May she now provide for you a speedy death!" But then, if the following child is a boy, the woman-attendant pleads for forgiveness, "Oh, Mairan, forgive me!
585 They longed for a boy. That is the reason why I scolded thee."[22] We have
942 already mentioned the marriage custom of leading the bride to a Mairem[23] Shrine, at which the children throw stones and say, "So many boys and only one blue-eyed girl grant thou Mairem, to this our dear bride!" The groomsman then must repeat this prayer.[24] At an Ossetine marriage the Ram-god (Firi-dzuar) is invoked: "Look down upon us and grant that this our bride may give birth to boys healthy and fat as sheep!"[25] We have also mentioned the marriage ceremony of placing a little boy on the lap of the bride, so that she may soon give birth to a boy (*supra*, p. 122). Or again, while the groomsman describes a triple

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[16] Grabovskij, "Ekonomičeskij i domašnij byt žitelej gorskago učastka Ingulevskago okruga," SSKG, III (1870), pp. 19 f; Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 439.

[17] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 202.

[18] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, II, p. 63. A similar custom is found in Ossetia (Pčelina, *op. cit.*, pp. 99 f.

[19] Makalatija, "Iz starogo narodnogo byt Pšavov," SE, 1938, No. 1, pp. 110 f.

[20] Makalatija, *op. cit.*, p. 108; Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, I, p. 98.

[21] *Istorija*, I, ii, p. 110.

[22] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 158.

[23] Baddeley interprets "Mairam," "Mairem," "Mairan" as "Mary," i. e., the Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ. However, Mairam is a male god, the protector of women, the brother of Uastrdzh. (Cf. Pčelina's report on his expedition of 1934—1936, "Rodil'nye obyčai u Osetin," SE, 1937, No. 4, p. 86, *note* 2.)

[24] Baddeley, *l. c.*

[25] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 270.

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circle in the air with his special wedding club he cries out three times, "Prosperity! Prosperity! Prosperity!" Then he explains just what is meant by "prosperity": "nine boys to every blue-eyed girl."[26] On New Year's Day the Ossetine boys go round to everyone wishing, that throughout the New Year "men might kill many stags and women might bear sons only."[27] Cursin tells us how a certain Ossete, Bergisov by name, received a vision from above. Now, in such a case, any two wishes will be granted, provided the person thus favoured make also a third wish, which, however, must be an evil one. Bergisov's good wishes were that he and his sons might live happily, while his third wish was that his daughters might die.[28] The birth of a first-born male child is celebrated with unusually great festivity and joy.[29] The happy mother returns to her father's house, where a special feast is given in honour of the baby boy.[30] After the birth of a girl, the mother goes with the baby to a Shrine of Mairem with the hope that the next child will be a boy.[31]

Some of the Caucasian TARTARS express their preference for boys in the following manner: the bride wears a garment in which nine knots are tied, a sign that she must give birth to seven boys and only two girls. They also have the custom of placing a little boy on the bride's lap.[32]

§ 4. INFANTICIDE AND BIRTH CONTROL

Since Caucasians, as a general rule, crave for children, it is only to be expected that infanticide and birth prevention should be rare. We do not find the practice of infanticide in North Caucasia, especially not in Daghestan, where Islamic influence is strong.[33] Islamism regards female infanticide as a very serious crime. Some of the mountaineers of Georgia indeed practice female infanticide, but the practice is thoroughly un-Georgian. The Svans as late as the last half of the nineteenth century would kill their baby girls immediately after birth by stuffing ashes into the mouth and then throttling the child till it suffocated,[34] or, sometimes, the infant was simply allowed to starve.[35] The Khevsurs prevented birth mainly by abortion, a practice still common today. A young couple in Khevsuria may not have a child till after the fourth year of

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[26] Kovalevskij, *Customs contemp.*, p. 17.

[27] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 194.

[28] *Ossetini*, p. 82. Cf. Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 180.

[29] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, pp. 340 f.

[30] Pčelina, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[31] Pčelina, *op. cit.*, p. 102. If a girl is born, only a very simple ceremony takes place: the *avsin* (mother of the household) brings the infant to the hearth without saying a word. (See Pčelina, *op. cit.*, p. 99.)

[32] Mir-Gašim-bek Vezirov, "Neskolko svědenij o Tatarskich pover'jach," SMOMPK, IX (1890), No. 2, pp. 111 f.

[33] Kovalevskij, *Zakon*, II, p. 202.

[34] Byhan, *La civilisation caucasienne*, p. 111; Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, ii, p. 110.

[35] Dubrovin, *l. c.*

in his arms; to make up for the transgression of the *adat* forbidding public manifestation of affection for one's children, he took out his dagger, crying, "I love my son, but you shall see also that I don't mind killing him," and if the men had not succeeded in calming him, he would have actually killed the child.[21]

It is indeed striking that we do not find the parent-in-law avoidances among the Lesghians; at least we have not found any reports in this regard. Parent-in-law avoidances would be quite impossible among the Lesghians, owing to the rule of endogamy.[22]

The SOUTHERN CAUCASIANS. Among the mountain tribes of Georgia the bride and groom, after having spent three days together,[23] are obliged to separate, the groom remaining with his parents and the bride returning to her family. The period of separation, according to Eristov, was a fortnight, according to Seidlitz, depending on agreement,[24] and according to Kosven, "for some weeks or years."[25] In ancient Imeretia the newly-weds would live at the bride's house for a week, after which the young man returned to his father's house, while his wife remained with her family for a year.[26] During the period of separation the husband might visit his wife only secretly. On her return to her husband she did not share a common room with him.[27] A Pshav couple may not call each other by name; instead they use the words "Man!" and "Woman!"[28] Similarly, the wife may not call any of her husband's male relatives by name.[29] In Svanetia one may not inquire about the health of the wife of another person unless related to her.[30] A Svan will never permit his wife to sit down beside him; and, in general, he is very reluctant to converse with her.[31] In Khevsuria a father may not carry his child in his arms or say a single friendly word to it in the presence of others.[32]

The OSSETES. In Ossetia the husband must live at the groomsman's house for a whole month after the wedding. He is forbidden to oppear before his father, older members of the household, or any older relatives and may visit his wife only secretly.[33] As soon as the young wife becomes pregnant she returns to her family and stays there till the child is born.[34]

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[21] *Supra*, pp. 149 f.

[22] *Supra*, pp. 51 f.

[23] Nansen, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

[24] Eristov, *op. cit.*, p. 110. Seidlitz, "Gemeinde- und Familienleben der Chewsuren," *Das Ausland*, 1891, No. 16, p. 320.

[25] M. O. Kosven, "Perežitki matriarchata u narodov Kavkaza," SE, 1936, No. 4—5, p. 217.

[26] *ibid.*

[27] Eristov, *op. cit.*, p. 111. See also Eichwald, *Reise auf dem Kaspischen Meer und in den Kaukasus*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 204.

[28] Makalatija, "Iz starogo narodnogo byta Pšavov," SE, 1938, No. 1, p. 109.

[29] Hahn, *Bilder aus dem Kaukasus*, p. 82.

[30] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, ii, p. 109.

[31] *ibid.*

[32] *Supra*, p. 150.

[33] Baddeley, *op. cit.*, I, p. 269.

[34] Hahn, "Die Täler der 'Grossen Ljachwa' und Ksanka (ksan) und das südliche Ossetien," *Globus*, LXXXVIII (1905), p. 24. It is worthy of note that the Kurds and the Armenians

TABLE 18

Rules of Marital, Parental, and Kinship Avoidance

RULES	Abkhaz	Cherkess	Chechens	Lesghians	Mountaineers of Georgia	Ossetes	Karachai
1. Bride and groom must live separately after wedding	For a year or till first child	For a year or till first child	For two or three weeks	No	Three to fourteen days	For a month after the wedding	Live together one month, then separate
2. Bride returns to her own family after the wedding	Bride lives with strangers	Bride lives with strangers	No, but husband must live elsewhere 2 to 3 weeks	No	Yes	Yes, goes to own family some months after wedding	Two months to two years with own family
3. Husband may visit wife during this period only secretly	Yes 3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Married couples may not appear together in public or before strangers	Yes	Yes	Yes	No			
5. When living in same house after period of separation the couple may not share common quarters	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	
6. May not mention name of husband		May not do so before others	Husband avoids speaking directly to wife even in private	No	Wife may not call husband by name and vice versa		
7. Prohibition to manifest love for one's own child before others	Yes	Yes. Also may not speak of child of person present	Yes. Father may not carry or fondle it	Yes	Yes. May not carry or say friendly word to child	Yes. Rule is very strict	
8. Husband must avoid parents-in-law	For several years	For a year after marriage	Husband may never speak to mother-in-law	No		Yes	
9. Wife must avoid older male relatives of husband (or husband must avoid relatives of wife)			Wife may not mention name of husband's first-cousin	No	May not call them by name	Yes	
10. The couple may not be seen together by parents or parents-in-law	For a year after marriage	For a year after marriage	Yes			Yes, during period of separation	Yes, during period of separation

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Chapter XII

Sexual Offenses

§ 1. CRIMES AND PENALTIES

684 628 The ancient customary law of the NORTHWESTERN CAUCASIANS imposes a death penalty on the adulteress, allowing the adulterer to go unpunished. According to Cherkess *adats* she might be killed in the act or anytime afterwards,[1] while the male partner had always to be spared. It is true, Leontovič's excellent collection of customary laws maintains the very contrary, expressly stating that the adulterer had to be punished too,[2] but the penalty imposed on him is doubtless an Islamic innovation.[3]

585 According to ancient customary law, the lot of the unfortunate bride found unchaste on her wedding night did not differ from that of the adulteress caught in the act. If the bride did not pass the virginity test, the angry groom would at once dismiss her, hand her over to her disgraced and furious father to be mutilated and finally killed.[4]

836 In case of pregnancy before marriage, the penalty imposed on the lover was somewhat less than the equivalent of bloodwite,[5] about twenty-five head of cattle, as Longworth found it in the beginning of the last century.[6]

Customary law hardly distinguishes between rape and abduction, although the collections do, for rape generally has the same purpose as bride capture. Rape is severely punished, as severely as murder. If the ravisher's life has been spared, he is obliged to pay as much as Rs. 150 in reparation for the insult suffered by the victim's sib, and besides this fine, he is forced to pay the usual *kalym*. He is also forced to marry the girl, for, generally, once raped, she has no hope of finding another mate. If the victim happens to be of a higher social class than the attacker, there is no reconciliation possible. Vengeance alone can atone for such a hideous crime.[7]

Incest is considered a qualified crime and is sanctioned by the severest penalties. Formerly if a Cherkess dared to marry a girl of his fraternity (*tleush*)[8]

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[1] Dubrovin, *Istorija*, I, i, p. 171.

[2] Leontovič, I, p. 254, § 109: "Imějuščij ženu i uličennyj v preljubolděljanii, po zakonu lišaetsja žizni, no tot že potupok, soveršennyj cholopom, podvergaet ego nakazaniju sta udarami; èto nazyvaetsja chod-tazir."

[3] Dirr, AGKB, p. 82.

[4] Byhan, *La civilisation caucasienne*, p. 155.

[5] Post, *Grundriß der ethnol. Jurispr.*, II, p. 378.

[6] *A Year among the Circassians*, I, p. 217.

[7] Grabovskij, "Očerk suda i ugolovnych prestuplenij v Kabardinskom okrugě," SSKG, IV (1870), pp. 42 f.

[8] *Supra*, p. 55.

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